

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 10728 141043Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2760

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FOLLOWING RECD FROM BOMBAY DATED JULY 12, 1978, SENT NEW DELHI
CALCUTTA, MADRAS BEING RPTD TO YOU

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BOMBAY 1698

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: POL, IN
SUBJ: MAHARASHTRA COALITION GOVERNMENT'S UNCERTAIN FUTURE

1. THE CONGRESS COALITION GOVERNMENT IS FACING A TEST OF
SURVIVAL, THE OUTCOME OF WHICH MAY BE KNOWN IN A FEW
DAYS. WITH THE FAILURE OF THE UNITY TALKS BETWEEN THE
TWO CONGRESS PARTIES FORMING THE STATE GOVERNMENT, THE
CONTINUATION OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT UNDER CHIEF
MINISTER VASANTRAO PATIL (CONGRESS) IS NOT ASSURED,
ALTHOUGH MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE ODDS ARE THAT
THE GOVERNMENT WILL MUDDLE THROUGH. BECAUSE THE TWO
CONGRESS PARTIES HAVE SO FAR FAILED TO UNITE
FORMALLY ON A PARTY LEVEL, THE STATE GOVERNMENT IS IN
TROUBLE. ACCORDING TO THE "TIMES OF INDIA", THE TEST
OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DURABILITY WILL PROBABLY COME
WHEN SEVERAL MONEY BILLS ARE VOTED ON IN THE ASSEMBLY
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IN A FEW DAYS.

2. THE FACTION OF THE MAHARASHTRA CONGRESS (C) PARTY
WHICH HAS OPPOSED UNITY WITH CONGRESS (I), AND
WHICH IS LED BY STATE INDUSTRIES MINISTER SHARED
PAWAR, HAS MOVED CLOSER TO THE JANATA OPPOSITION
PARTY RECENTLY. PAWAR HAS THE SUPPORT OF

40-65 MLA'S (IN AN ASSEMBLY OF 288 MLA'S) A CLOSE FRIEND OF CHANDRA SHERKAR, HE IS AMBITIOUS AND LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPLACE PATIL AS CHIEF MINISTER. PAWAR ALSO ENJOYS THE SUPPORT OF CONGRESS (C) STALWART, Y.B. CHAVAN. AS A RESULT OF HIS ERRODING POSITION, CHIEF MINISTER PATIL HAS INSTRUCTED HIS MLA'S TO REMAIN PRESENT IN THE HOUSE IN FULL STRENGTH DURING THE CURRENT SESSION BECAUSE EVERY VOTE COULD COUNT IF THE JANATA MOVES TO UNSEAT THE GOVERNMENT.

3. AS FOR THE OTHER PARTNER IN THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, CONGRESS (I), IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY FACTIONALIZED. AS ESTIMATED 15 OF THIS GROUPS 73 MLA'S MIGHT CROSS PARTY LINES, JOINING THE JANATA OPPOSITION, IF IT APPEARS TO THEM THAT THE PATIL GOVERNMENT MIGHT FALL.

4. THE CURRENTLY UNSTABLE POSITIONAL SITUATION IN MAHARAHSTRA HAS ENCOURAGED THE STATE JANATA PARTY TO WORK HARDER TO UNSEAT THE GOVERNMENT. ANATA RANKS HERE APPEAR TO HAVE CLOSED SOMEWHAT FOLLOWING THE DISMISSAL OF CHARAN SINGH. THE JANATA IS CURRENTLY TRYING TO ATTRACK TO ITS FOLD, WHIH NOW CONSIST OF 133 MLA'S, MEMBERS OF THE AWAR CONGRESS (C) GROUP AND DISSIDENT CONGRESS (I) LEGISLATURES TO GIVE IT A MAJORITY. STATE JANATA LEADERS HAVE RECENTLY VISITED NEW DELHI TO DISCUSS STRATEGY, AND THE 12 JULY NESPAPERS REPORT THAT CHANDRA SHEKAR IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREPARED TO FLY DOWN AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE IF IT WILL ASSIST TO GET THE JANATA INTO POWER IN THE STATE. JENKINS UNQUOTE
GOHEEN

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